

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 9083

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y TEXT (PARA 5)

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJECT: RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. SUMMARY: SINCE THE CONVENING OF PARLIAMENT NOVEMBER 1, THE PACE OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY HAS QUICKENED PERCEPTIBLY. THE GLUE THAT HAS HELD THE FOUR PARTY COALITION TOGETHER FOR 20 MONTHS INCREASINGLY SEEMS TO BE IN DANGER OF BECOMING UNSTUCK. PRIMIN DEMIREL, WHOSE JUSTICE PARTY (JP) IS THE MAJORITY PARTNER IN THE COALITION, HAS SPENT MUCH OF HIS TIME IN RECENT WEEKS FENDING OFF CHALLENGES TO HIS AUTHORITY BY THE NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) AND THE NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY (NAP). THE NSP, ALTHOUGH SUFFERING FROM ITS OWN INTERNAL PROBLEMS, HAS MOUNTED A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO DEMIREL'S CONTROL OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES. THE NAP APPEARS TO BE TRYING TO GAIN CONTROL OVER A LARGE PORTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM. DEMIREL AND HIS PARTY ARE TRYING TO RESIST THESE ASSAULTS WITHOUT DESTROYING THE COALITION. THE OPPOSITION REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) HAS BEEN UNABLE TO CAPITALIZE ON THE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE COALITION BECAUSE OF ITS OWN INTERNAL

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PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

2. PARLIAMENT CONVENED NOVEMBER 1 FOR THE 1976-77 LEGISLATIVE SESSION. SINCE PRESIDING OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT ARE ELECTED FOR TWO YEAR PERIODS, THIS YEAR'S SESSION WAS ABLE TO BEGIN ITS NORMAL LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY WITHOUT THE TWO AND ONE HALF MONTH DELAY WHICH SUCH ELECTIONS CAUSED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PREVIOUS SESSION. NEVERTHELESS, DURING ITS FIRST FOUR WEEKS IN SESSION THIS YEAR, THE PARLIAMENT HAS PASSED NO REPEAT NO LEGISLATION. ITS ONLY LEGISLATIVE ACTION HAS BEEN TO BEGIN PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATION OF TWO MINOR BILLS.

3. ONE MAJOR REASON FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY STALEMATE IS AN APPARENTLY GROWING LACK OF COHESIVENESS WITHIN THE COALITION GOVERNMENT. THE MOST IMPORTANT CONFLICT WITHIN THE COALITION SEEMS TO BE BETWEEN ITS TWO LARGEST PARTNERS, THE JP AND NSP. THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF THIS CONFLICT IS A PUBLIC DIFFERENCE OF OPINION ABOUT TURKEY'S INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. PRIMIN DEMIREL AND HIS PARTY HAVE HISTORICALLY ASSOCIATED THEMSELVES WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFRA-STRUCTURE PROJECTS AND HAVE GNERALLY LEFT INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS TO PRIVATE OR QUASI-PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS. ERBAKAN AND HIS NSP IN CONTRAST INSIST THAT DEVELOPMENT OF HEAVY INDUSTRY SHOULD BE THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THE GOVERNMENT. ERBAKAN HAS DRAMATIZED HIS POSITION WITH A SEEMINGLY ENDLESS SERIES OF FOUNDATION-LAYING CEREMONIES OF NEW INDUSTRIAL INSTALLATIONS, MAINLY LOCATED IN EASTERN TURKEY. THE RESULTANT PUBLICITY HAS GENERATED SOME CONCERN WITHIN THE COALITION THAT ERBAKAN AND THE NSP MIGHT REAP POLITICAL BENEFITS FROM THESE ACTIONS. SOMEWHAT BALANCING THIS IS THE FACT THAT MOST OF THESE CEREMONIES HAVE LEFT BEHIND NOTHING BUT VACANT LOTS AND INFLATED EXPECTATIONS WHICH HAVE BECOME POTENTIAL POLITICAL LIABILITIES FOR THE NSP.

4. FOR VARIOUS REASONS, ERBAKAN'S ACTIONS HAV COME UNDER INCREASING CRITICISM FROM THE OPPOSITION AND THE PESS. HE HAS REFUSED TO ADJUST HIS PROGRAM, HOWEVER, AND HAS IN FACT RECEIVED PUBLIC ASSURANCES FROM DEMIREL THAT HIS PROJECTS WILL BE FUNDED. THE ASSURANCES ALLEGEDLY CAME ONLY AFTER ERBAKAN HAD DELAYED FOR THREE HOURS THE BEGINNING OF A COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING NOVEMBER 18. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, ERBAKAN IS STILL NOT SATISFIED WITH WHAT DEMIREL HAS DONE, HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND HHE HAS PRESENTED THE PRIMIN WITH A NEW SERIES OF DEMANDS CONCERNING INDUSTRIALIZATION AND SEVERAL OTHER ISSUES.

5. THE STRAIN BETWEEN THE NAP AND THE JP IS A RESULT OF ALLEGEDLY SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS BY THE NAP TO TAKE OVER CERTAIN ELEMENM OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. THIS PROBLEM SURFACED NOVEMBER 10 WHEN THE JP MINISTER OF EDUCATION SUDDENLY ANNOUNCED THAT EXAMINIATIONS WHICH HAD BEEN GIVEN FOR SECONDARY

TEACHERS' TRAINING SCHOOLS HAD BEEN DECLARED INVALID AND THAT EXAMS WOULD BE RE-SCHEDULED. THE REPORTED REASON FOR THE MINISTER'S ACTION WAS THAT THE EXAM HAD CONTAINED A DISTINCT PRO-NAP BIAS, THE MOST GLARING EXAMPLE OF WHICH WAS A SERIES OF QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE PERSONALITIES AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE NAP. NAP SPOKESMEN HAVE PROTESTED AGAINST THE MINISTER'S ACTION, DELCARING IT BE UNCONSTITUTIONAL. NEVERTHELESS, THE EXAMINATIONS WERE REPEATED NOVEMBER 22, ALTHOUGH RIGHTIST YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS HELD PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS IN SEVERAL CITIES NOVEMBER 19 (IZMIR 369, ADANA 289). THE FACT THAT TURKES HAS NOT INVOLVED HIMSELF PERSONALLY IN THIS DISPUTE CONSIDERED BY OPPOSITION CRITICS AS EVIDENCE THAT THE RESCHEDULING CRISIS WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A PUBLIC PERFORMANCE BY DEMIREL FORCED ON HIM BY THE REVELATION OF NAP BIAS IN THE EXAMINATION.

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6. THE FOURTH PARTY OF THE COALITION, THE REPUBLICAN RELIANCE (RR), APPEARS TO BE UNHAPPY WITH BOTH THE NSP AND THE NAP. THE RR CONSIDERS ITSELF TO BE THE GUARDIAN OF THE PRINCIPLES OF ATATURK AND IS DISTURBED BY THE EXTREME (AND ANTI-ATATURK) POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE NAP AND NSP. MOREOVER, THE RR, WHICH NOW APPEARS MORIBUND, HAS BEEN DISILLUSIONED BY ITS PARTICIPATION IN THE COALITION. IT HAD APPARENTLY HOPED TO BE ABLE EITHER TO

REINVIGORATE THE PARTY OR TO INCORPORATE ITSELF INTO THE JP WHILE MAINTAINING SOME IDENTITY AND INFLUENCE. LAST WEEK, THE RR SUFFERED ANOTHER SETBACK WHEN ONE OF ITS TEN DEPUTIES IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RESIGNED LEAVING THE PARTY WITH LESS THAN THE MINIMUM REQUIRED STRENGTH TO FORM A NATIONAL ASSEMBLY GROUP AND THUS PARTICIPATE IN THE ASSEMBLY'S COMMITTEES.

7. ANOTHER SIGN OF A BREAKDOWN OF COALITION DISCIPLINE WAS THE ELECTION NOVEMBER 23 OF A CHAIRMAN OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION ESTABLISHED TO INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT CULPABILITY IN THE FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES CHARGED TO PRIME MINISTER DEMIREL'S NEPHEW. SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMISSION EARLY THIS YEAR, IT HAD MET 79 TIMES IN UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN. (SUCH A COMMISSION CANNOT FUNCTION UNTIL A CHAIRMAN IS ELECTED.) NOVEMBER 23 THE RPP, NSP, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND RR MEMBERS VOTED TOGETHER TO ELECT AN RR MEMBER CHAIRMAN.

8. ON REASON THE COALITION HAS BEEN ABLE TO HOLD ITSELF TOGETHER UNTIL NOW IS THE INABILITY OF THE OPPOSITION RPP TO PUT ASIDE ITS INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND CONCENTRATE ITS EFFORTS ON UNDERMINING THE COALITION. THE RPP DURING THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS HAS BEEN PREOCCUPIED BY PREPARATIONS FOR ITS BIENNIAL CONGRESS WHICH BEGAN ON NOVEMBER 27. IF THE RPP SHOULD EMERGE FROM THE CONGRESS BETTER UNIFIED, ITS ABILITY TO EXPLOIT THE PROBLEMS WITHIN THE COALITION WILL BE GREATLY IMPROVED. IN ALL LIKELIHOOD, HOWEVER, THE RPP WILL BE LESS, RATHER THAN MORE, UNITED AFTER THE CONGRESS. AS A RESULT, THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROBABLY HAVE A FEW MORE MONTHS OF RESPIRE FROM EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION ASSAULT.

9. COMMENT: DEMIREL'S MOST NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENT DURING THE PAST 20 MONTHS HAS BEEN HOLDING HIS COALITION TOGETHER DESPITE THE DISPARATE AND SOMETIME MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE INTERESTS OF THE COALITION PARTNERS. AS ELECTIONS APPROACH, THAT TASK IS BECOMING MORE DIFFICULT. WE BELIEVE THAT EACH PARTY OF THE COALITION, AND PARTICULARLY THE SMALLER ONES, STILL SEES ITS INTERESTS BEST SERVED BY BEING PART OF THE GOVERNMENT. IT IS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR, THEREFORE, WHY ERBAKAN AND HIS NSP ARE INCREASINGLY TESTING THE STRENGTH OF THE COALITION. THE MOST LIKELY EXPLANATION IS THAT ERBAKAN IS SIMPLY BARGAINING AND THAT HE WILL RETREAT IF AND WHEN HE SEES THE COALITION THREATENED. SULEYMAN ARIF EMRE, A CO-FOUNDER OF THE NSP, TOLD EMBOFF NOVEMBER 27 THAT ALTHOUGH HIS PARTY FOR MORE THAN A YEAR HAD BEEN VERY DISCONTENTED WITH THE COALITION, IT HAD NO REPEAT NO CURRENT INTENTION OF LEAVING THE COALITION. HE SAID THE RPP HAD SUGGESTED TO THE NSP THE FORMATION OF A NEW TWO-PARTY COALITION BUT THE NSP HAD REJECTED THIS SUGGESTION FOR TWO REASONS: (1) THE IDEOLOGIES OF THE TWO PARTIES WERE INCOMPATIBLE, AND (2) THE NSP

IN AN ELECTION YEAR DID NOT WANT TO TARNISH ITSELF BY ASSOCIATION
WITH A PARTY WHICH IS ANATHEMA TO MANY OF ITS PROSPECTIVE VOTERS.
EMRE'S COMMENTS TEND TO SUBSTANTIATE OUR ASSESSMENT THAT THE
NSP IS NOT CONSCIOUSLY SEEKING TO BRING DOWN THE COALITION. THE
POSSIBILITY CANNOT BE IGNORED, HOWEVER, THE ERBAKAN, WHOSE
BEHAVIOR IS OFTEN ERRATIC, WILL OVER-ESTIMATE DEMIREL'S CAPACITY
FOR COMPROMISE AND CONCILIATION AND THEREBY PROVOKE THE
DISSOLUTION OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.
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